



Peaceful Pathways

ALTERNATIVES TO VIOLENCE PROJECT

Western Australia

Summer 2007

AVP - PLANNING DAY, Feb 3rd, 2007.

A great time was had by the nine facilitators who had some time to discuss issues, make plans, and renew enthusiasms.

The gathering: "what continues to draw me to AVP" produced some very meaningful comments just a few snippets:

"something in AVP captured me, and it's always there now, in my everyday life

"the magic of forming community in a workshop....

"the 'feel good' factor in belonging to a successful group.....

"opportunity to get in touch with my own and others' humanity...

"desire to make the streets safer - AVP is a way to reduce fear and is a drop in the bucket of service for the world.....

"benefit of self-development occurring

"a reminder of Dad's saying: God make me a good kid without worrying me

"excitement of looking at the world in a different way.....

"people at all levels from individuals to the global picture - AVP makes a difference.....

"war and arguments are a huge waste of energy and resources in these days of global warming."

- We discussed necessary organisational matters - meeting timetables, workshop timetables (so far - many more will emerge), and training session timetables.

Our annual general meeting will be in March, at which time, new committee members are encouraged to volunteer themselves.

We discussed the value of the newsletter, now that we have regular issues. The work of our project officer was discussed after she presented her report. We're grateful to Anna Alderson for her concerted efforts, some of which will bear fruit after the project funding is finished.

A major topic was possible expansion plans which are quite exciting. One new venture is a series of workshops in the Midland area, to be known as the Midland Project. Another is to link HIPP with an accredited TAFE training course, and another, the as yet vague possibility of offering training to the East Timorese community for use back in their homeland.

Then there is the possibility of resuming workshops in Casuarina Prison, where it all began thirteen years ago, and to go even further back in time, the capturing of the earliest AVP stories from Stephen Angell and others who pioneered the

organisation. Each of these projects needs a particular keen person to carry it forward, and of course assistants to ensure that action follows enthusiasm.

There was a good feeling of energy about the day, and a re-commitment to taking AVP further into our community. Now, let's see what happens.

- Jo Vallentine

Up and Coming workshops 1st semester 2007

Acacia Basic Mainstream
3-5 March

Community Basic Loftus Centre
30-31 March 1 April

Acacia Advanced - mainstream
31 March, 1-2 April

Community Basic at Bicton
21-22 April

Advanced Acacia-protection
25-27 May

Community Advanced at Bicton
2-3 June

Acacia T4F—combined
22-24 June

Facilitators Participating in the AVP-WA 2007 Planning Day



Social, Justice and The Church by Brenda Sturrock

The international AVP gathering in South Africa was attended by 3 representatives for AVP-WA. These representatives have shared their experiences of the gathering at training nights, the end of year gathering and the newsletter. Brenda Sturrock was touched by the courage of many she met at the gathering she writes.....

It is now Three months since returning from the A.V.P.I.G. many thoughts still linger in my head about the injustices that we heard about. I met many courageous, strong people at the gathering who embrace their own brand of religion (integrating body, mind, emotions, and spirit) know who they are, live the AVP model and have a commitment to interfaith work.

There was an atmosphere of trust, love and healing, a real feeling of safety but once we left the Good Shepherd retreat it was very different. My optimism fell.

Shocked by the living conditions of so many and the social injustices tolerated by those with status and money. The victory that was won now seems to be falling into decay. Many talented and educated people are leaving to flee the crime and corruption.

We had a long talk by a representative of the SA. council of churches. He spoke at length about the history leading up to and after the first democratic election in 1994. Some people say that the churches were terrorists, others said that they were freedom fighters.

We were told about the churches work with healing the memories of the hurting people. That is good, but we did not hear a lot about repentance or compensation. Still people say "we can't have peace without justice". I agree with that. We all want peace; I'm glad that I did not have to live there at that time.

I noticed an article in the West Australian Newspaper about the launch of a Centre for Social Justice, an initiative of the mainstream churches. The think tank chairman, Canberra's Bishop Browning says "the bible has more than 2800 verses relating to social justice issues, yet it's importance is overlooked" .

On that subject, as an example; I wonder when the first woman will become a bishop here in Australia? That injustice-corrected, might be a really big example of change for the better, world wide.

Name Switch

I came across this name game sometime ago and just found it again recently and thought it may be fun to give it a go at a workshop:

Everyone starts walking around the room

When they meet someone they introduce themselves by saying their name

They then move on, but now introduce themselves using the name they just heard.

At some point ding the bell, and people keep going until they get their own name back.

(Funny thing is there is always someone missing a name due to a mistake)

A message from NSW

Hi everyone in WA. Thank you so much for the great newsletter. I like hearing from AVP groups everywhere. We have just finished an enormous year in the prisons and with parolees, 28 workshops and, most exciting, our first inmate facilitators in the Mains at Bathurst Correctional Centre - we now have about 50

inmate facilitators around NSW though we only manage to go to four jails at the moment as well as running parolee workshops in Lithgow. All the best to AVPers in WA from AVP Blue Mountains [prisons], Sabine Erika, Coordinator.

**"Heat and animosity,
contest and conflict, may
sharpen the wits,
although they rarely do;
they never strengthen the
understanding, clear the
perspicacity, guide the
judgment, or improve the
heart."**

- Walter Savage Landor

Reflections from AVP International Gathering 2006

For me to have attended the AVP IG in 2006 was made possible by the generosity and sponsorship from AVP-WA, Thankyou, Thankyou, Thankyou!

What touched me most was what was happening in Rwanda. “What”? You may ask.

AVP was brought to Rwanda in 2001 and is now beginning to feel like a movement of hope, of healing, of slow reconciliation, of possibility.

Rwanda was hurtled on to the world stage in the 1994 genocide when 1 million Tutsis and moderate Hutus were killed in a period of 100 days. After the overthrow of the Hutu Power government, thousands of refugees fled in fear of revenge killings. The new government imprisoned many alleged perpetrators of genocide.

The numbers overburdened the court system. Many accused remained in jail without trial. This not only left the prisoners without a fair hearing and the state with

the burden of supporting them, but also left survivors of genocide in limbo, waiting to hear the truth of what happened to their families and see justice done.

In 2003, the nation was at a crossroads. The government decided to release over 30,000 prisoners, sending them first to solidarity camps for 3 months then returning them to their communities. The influx of prisoners was already having significant effects on Rwanda and could have jeopardised the fragile peace that existed. The strain of the social fabric required innovative ways to deal with the country's violent history.

The government decided on using a traditional form of arbitration (Gacaca) to settle lower level cases in an effort to bring justice and reconciliation to victims and suspected perpetrators of genocide. Lower level cases were those who allegedly looted destroyed property and participated in killing but were coerced / pressured to do so.

It was estimated that without Gacaca the cases would take 200 years to process. Gacaca literally

way Rwandan people used to resolve their problems

The Quaker Society in Rwanda had brought AVP to Rwanda in 2001. To support the Gacaca process and to contribute to its ability to promote and to contribute to its ability to promote reconciliation, an intensive AVP training was launched. In 10 months AVP trained 1167 Gacaca judges in 11 of Rwanda's provinces. The project has been evaluated and AVP is a highly valued and respected programme in Rwanda. The work is far from over. The vision is to have a Rwandan society that has a

vibrant culture of peace, which respects human rights, and which improves the living standards of all its members.

“AMAHORO” Bheena

"With courage you will dare to take risks, have the strength to be compassionate, and the wisdom to be humble. Courage is the foundation of integrity."

- Keshavan Nair

Advanced workshop in Bicton

An advanced workshop was held in Bicton on Jan 21 and 22. As in the Basic workshop, there was a compressed time schedule due to a church service on Sunday morning. This necessarily required the adjustment of some aspects of the usual advanced workshop. Nevertheless it was very well received by the participants, as was seen in the evaluations.

Although the group was small, it

was an adequate number due in part to their high level of interest and involvement throughout the two days. The choice of focus topic made by the group for the workshop was “Anger to Transforming Power through communication.” The team felt that the agendas it designed were especially appropriate and effective. There was a sense throughout the workshop of thematic strength and cogency

supporting a flow of experiences and thoughts.

An unexpected treat was the generous and delicious catering on a voluntary basis by the one of the participants.

- Jim Thom

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Training Evenings and Days for 2007

All AVP facilitators are encouraged to attend these lively training nights, which not only hone our skills, but also help in building community within the group.

Peter Prisgrove is again facilitating most training sessions, except those in Acacia Prison. He is always assisted by others, and in the case of the Acacia sessions, they are planned between inmate/outmate regulars.

In all cases, facilitators are asked to bring manuals to the sessions.

Thurs. 1st Mar.: Sally & Kelli assisting Peter with Evaluations, Role Play Wraps and Workshop report formats.

Thurs. 5th April: Sally & Kelli assisting with Prison Workshop challenges.

Sat. 5th May: Acacia training – inmates' agenda.

Thurs. 7th June: Jim & Roger assisting with structure and delivery of the Basic Workshop.

Thurs. 5th July: Anna assisting with guest speaker on Different Learning Styles.

Sat. 4th Aug.: Acacia Training – inmates' agenda.

Thurs. 6th Sept.: Jo & Peter – Advanced Workshop: structure and delivery.

Thurs. 4th Oct.: Olwyn & Bheena - HIPP – how it works!

Thurs. 1st Nov.: Jim & Peter – the Training for Facilitators' workshop: structure and delivery.